

Did Lord Krishna Make Women Equal by *mām-hi pārtha vyapāśritya verse?*

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Prima Facie (Purva-paksa)

Recently, trying to answer the Suniti Purport (SB 4.12.32) regarding women not allowed to become diksa-gurus, some of the devotees have opined that there is a flow of events from satya-yuga (time of Dhruva) to kali-yuga.

There was strict varnasrama in satya-yuga and thus position of women was very subservient, they did not have much rights.

But then Lord Krishna came in Dvapara-yuga and declared in the Bhagavad-gita—*mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye’pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ | striyo vaiśyas tathā śūdrās te’pi yānti parām gatim* ||BG 9.32||—and thus Lord Krishna Himself tried to releave the position of women and to open doors of liberation for them bringing them on equal footing with men.

In Kaliyuga, when He came as Lord Caitanya he made it more liberal and we find that after Him there were many Female Diksa-gurus like Jahnava Mata, Hemalata Thakurani, Gangamata Goswamini, etc. In present times, Srila Prabhupada acknowledged this and said that there can be some Female Diksa-gurus.

My Answer to this (Siddhantin)¹:

It has tactfully been presented above that Lord Krishna Himself ordered change in social system away from varnasrama by establishing the path of surrender to Him, and because he told this just 5000 years ago (much nearer to our times than satya-yuga) it is more applicable for us than Suniti’s case which was in Satya-yuga.

However, one needs to carefully think:

Was this instruction of Lord Krishna (in 9.32) not available before 5000 years?

If yes, then the whole argument falls assunder, as this is the root. In the Bhagavad-gita 4.1, Lord says that he gave this knowledge to Sun God Vivasvan, and Srila Prabhupada comments thus:

The Gītā is not, therefore, a speculative treatise for the insignificant mundane scholar but is a standard book of knowledge coming down from time immemorial.

In the Mahābhārata (Śānti-parva 348.51-52) we can trace out the history of the Gītā as follows:

tretā-yugāḍau ca tato vivasvān manave dadau

manuś ca loka-bhṛty-arthaṁ sūtāyekaśvākave dadau

ikṣvākunā ca kathito vyāpya lokān avasthitaḥ

¹ I am answering only single point here; the root. For detailed answer you could contact me personally, I will supply the whole reply document.

"In the beginning of the millennium known as Tretā-yuga this science of the relationship with the Supreme was delivered by Vivasvān to Manu. Manu, being the father of mankind, gave it to his son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this earth planet and forefather of the Raghu dynasty, in which Lord Rāmacandra appeared." Therefore, Bhagavad-gītā existed in human society from the time of Mahārāja Ikṣvāku.

At the present moment we have just passed through five thousand years of the Kali-yuga, which lasts 432,000 years. Before this there was Dvāpara-yuga (800,000 years), and before that there was Tretā-yuga (1,200,000 years). Thus, some 2,005,000 years ago, Manu spoke the Bhagavad-gītā to his disciple and son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this planet earth. The age of the current Manu is calculated to last some 305,300,000 years, of which 120,400,000 have passed. Accepting that before the birth of Manu the Gītā was spoken by the Lord to His disciple the sun-god Vivasvān, a rough estimate is that the Gītā was spoken at least 120,400,000 years ago; and in human society it has been extant for two million years. It was respoken by the Lord again to Arjuna about five thousand years ago. (Bg. 4.1, Purport)

So He must have spoken the knowledge of BG 9.32 to Vivasvan also, who must have transferred it to Manu, he to Iksavaku, etc. Thus, it is not that Bg. 9.32, the process of surrender is not for Satya-yuga (Suniti's time). Nor is it that Bg. 9.32 recommends to not consider varnasrama. By the way Dhruva Maharaja did not get Vaidika-diksa but pancaratrika-diksa which is the one Lord Krishna mentions in this verse (BG 9.32)—the path of surrender—*vypāśraya*.

Then what did *mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya* verse mean?

Taking shelter and going back to Godhead doesn't mean to change your duties but to go on performing your duties as an offering to the Lord in line with *sve sve karmany abhiratah*. After Arjuna was convinced he fought as a ksatriya. You don't need to become diksa-guru to go back home back to Godhead or even to surrender. Thus, this sloka and purport nowhere supports that devotee women can do man's services. But it establishes that whatever services we are engaged in according to our svadharma, yields us the same result of going back home back to Godhead. It is not that if a woman is engaged in stri-dharma and not engaged in going out and preaching like men, or worship the deities, or performing yajnas, then they will have less opportunity for spiritual advancement; no they will have same opportunity. These works will give them the same results. Srila Prabhupada clarifies his desire for women disciples as follows:

Prabhupāda: Everything will be satisfied. Just like our women, Kṛṣṇa conscious, they are working. They don't want equal rights with men. It is due to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are cleansing the temple, they are cooking very nicely. They are satisfied. They never say that "I have to go to Japan for preaching like Prabhupāda." They never say. This is artificial. So Kṛṣṇa consciousness means work in his constitutional position. The women, men, when they remain in their constitutional position, there will be no artificial

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